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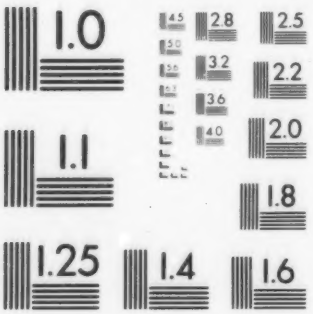

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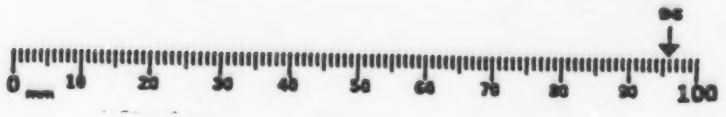

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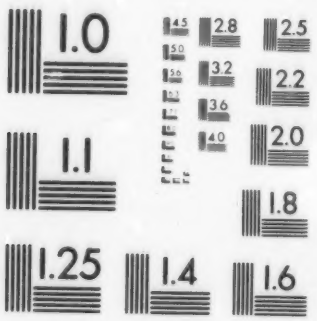

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CHANGE
AND
TRANSITIONS

The path
from A to B...

a straight line

moving forward

with your life

b

Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

the people & workplace department

This booklet is for the person experiencing change in their life. It can increase your personal management by helping you

- understand how voluntary and involuntary changes impact your life
- develop and apply strategies to adapt and respond effectively to life and work changes and transitions
- examine and engage in work, family and leisure activities that contribute to your mental, emotional, physical and economic well being
- identify what causes you stress
- explore and apply stress management strategies
- connect with further information and resources

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Life is a state of constant change. Some changes are profound and may seem overwhelming, like losing your job or ending a relationship. Others are as simple as walking home a new way.

Changes are based on an external event. Something happens that results in a fundamental difference in your situation. How you react and adjust to this change is a transition. A transition is the process people go through when making a change.

This book takes a closer look at changes and how you can work through them. You'll learn about voluntary and involuntary changes, dealing with one change at a time and how risk and change work together. You'll learn the steps of working through transitions, understanding and facing fear, and taking risks.

It also looks at some of the stresses people face when dealing with changes and transitions, as well as some methods to lessen that stress.

All in all, this book will shed some light on planned and unexpected changes, how they affect you, and how you can effectively work through them.

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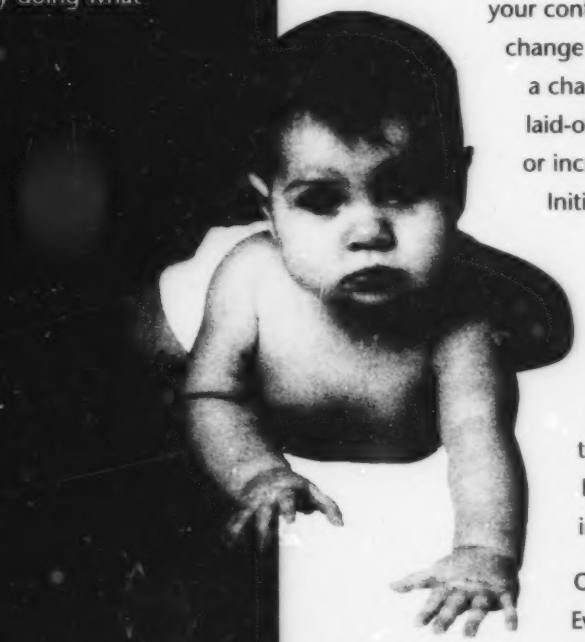
Managing Your Own Career – Dave's Story

Dave is a businessman who loves the thrill of making a deal. His interest in marketing began in college, where he studied business. He progressed through a number of sales positions with different companies and worked as a sales manager for western Canada. When he was promoted to operations manager, Dave found he missed sales and that he was away from his family too much. After analyzing what he really wanted out of work, Dave accepted a new position as account manager for a company moving into the Alberta market. He is enjoying the challenges of setting up and marketing the new business. As well, Dave is working from his home and is seldom away for more than a night.

Dave created a change for himself and is happy doing what he loves best.



Understanding Change

Voluntary and Involuntary Change

There are two kinds of changes – voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary changes are the changes you choose to make and are prepared for. Examples include quitting a job, accepting a promotion, taking early retirement, or starting your own business. When you take charge and choose to make a change in your life, you may feel excited, relieved or anxious – all typical reactions.

Involuntary changes are ones that happen and are beyond your control. These can be a change in health; a change in a relationship due to death or divorce; a change in your work situation such as being laid-off, fired or forced to retire; or a decrease or increase in demand for your skills or services. Initially, most people react to involuntary changes with anger, sadness or fear.

Changes can be both voluntary *and* involuntary depending on the situation and how you view it. For example, you may voluntarily choose to get additional training, but you may be doing this to avoid losing your job and feel you have no choice in the matter.

One thing is for sure, change is constant. Every day we face new changes – voluntary and involuntary, big and small – and you'll know how to work through them if you are prepared.

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Take Charge of Change

In today's workplace, making strategic career moves is perfectly acceptable. As a worker today, you don't expect employers to look after your career, as was often the case in your parent's generation. You now manage your own career path and look to create your own opportunities. Not only do you have the power to change your work role or work environment, but also other areas of your life.

Prepare for Expected Changes

Trends can be a source of change. A trend is a widespread change in social direction such as the increased use of technology at work and its effect on the labour market. Trends don't just pop up, they grow like a wave, gathering momentum. Trends are supported by a great deal of evidence and are identified by many sources. Looking back, you can trace the start of a trend, its growth, and its effect on society. By keeping an eye on trends, you can become aware and prepare for upcoming changes.

- Look for trends by reading, watching TV, talking to people, and checking out websites.
- Contact professional associations or unions for information.
- Take action to respond to trends.
- Prepare for future opportunities.

Areas of Interest

Are you looking to spot some trends? Consider these.

Global Trends – Information technology continues to reshape business. New trade partnerships are creating global markets for local goods and services and new opportunities for doing business.

Catching a Trend – Jennifer's Story

Jennifer had always worked in the food service and retail industry. Now as a 24 year-old single mom, she wanted to build a stable future for her newborn daughter and herself. While watching a TV program on the aging population and the increased demand for health care workers, Jennifer had an idea. She had always loved helping seniors and decided to find out more about working with seniors in a health care setting. Jennifer spoke to a career counsellor and researched the different occupations and training paths available. She decided to upgrade her high school education and become a licensed practical nurse.

Trends are a great source of opportunities. Jennifer looked at a trend and found a work role that fit her interests and allowed her to develop new skills.

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DID YOU KNOW?

People who live an active, balanced life with a variety of interests and supports, who stay current and involved in life, are usually able to respond and cope much better to unplanned changes than those who do not.

Preparing for the Future – Sharon's Story

As an office assistant, Sharon came across a report on e-business in the office. The report looked at the Internet's impact on office support workers. E-business is changing the tools used by clerical workers, where they work and their relationships with clients, customers, suppliers, managers, and colleagues. Sharon wanted to know how this trend would affect her work. What could she do to prepare herself? What skills and knowledge would she need in the future? Sharon found specific recommendations for office workers to prepare themselves. She started to follow these, becoming more pro-active, taking on projects, and applying for opportunities that would allow her to learn new skills.

Sharon was aware of the need to look for trends and positioned herself to take advantage of future changes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Focus, attitude and direction can help you prepare to take action and respond to trends.

Social Trends – Alberta households are changing, with fewer two parent families and more '"blended" and single parent families. Double income families are facing challenges balancing time with work and family commitments. Also, young people are living with their parents longer.

Demographic Trends – Alberta's population is aging, with a large number of baby boomers moving into their mid-50s and considering retirement. People from other provinces and countries continue to move to Alberta, creating growth in services and infrastructure.

Technological Trends – Increasing advances in information technology continue to reshape the work world as well as every part of your daily life. Growth is increasing in many areas including electronic commerce (E-commerce), the Internet, biotechnology and use of synthetic materials.

Environmental Trends – Concern for the environment is creating opportunities to explore issues such as energy conservation and efficiency, global warming, waste management and water treatment.

(Adapted from *Alberta Careers Beyond 2000 Update*. See Resources)

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Change Happens

Some changes just happen and you have no control over them. These kinds of changes are involuntary and can be work-related such as getting laid off or having your company reorganize – or they can be personal such as getting injured or losing a loved one. We're often left feeling helpless like a deer caught in the headlights. What can you do about involuntary changes at work, home, and in your life?

Are You Prepared for the Future?

Regardless of what kind of work you do, you can look for trends and be ready to take advantage of future opportunities.

1. What trends are affecting your current work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Hint: Start by reading *Alberta Careers Beyond 2000 Update* (See Resources)

2. What actions can you take now to respond to these trends?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Look Before You Leap

Before deciding to make a major change, consider the following factors.

SKILLS *– Do you have the necessary training, or do you need to develop additional skills? Where can you get this training? How long will it take and how much will it cost?*

RESEARCH *– Have you looked for trends in the area you're interested in? Will the job market still be strong by the time you have completed your education or training?*

MOVING *– Is the work you're interested in available near you? Do you have to relocate? How willing are you to move? How much will it cost you?*

SUPPORT *– Where does your family stand on your possible new career direction? Do they understand the challenges and support your decision?*

Responding to Trends – Eric's Story

When Eric was 51 years old, he was laid off from his job as a meteorological technician when new equipment was brought into his office. Eric was relieved. The writing had been on the wall and this ended his uncertainty on what to do about his job. As an avid user of technology, the advances and uses of global positioning systems (GPS) fascinated Eric. He used his time to research training and self-employment opportunities. Both anxious and excited about his future, Eric looked forward to working as a contractor in an emerging area.

Because Eric expected change and had been keeping up with trends, he was in a good position to take action.

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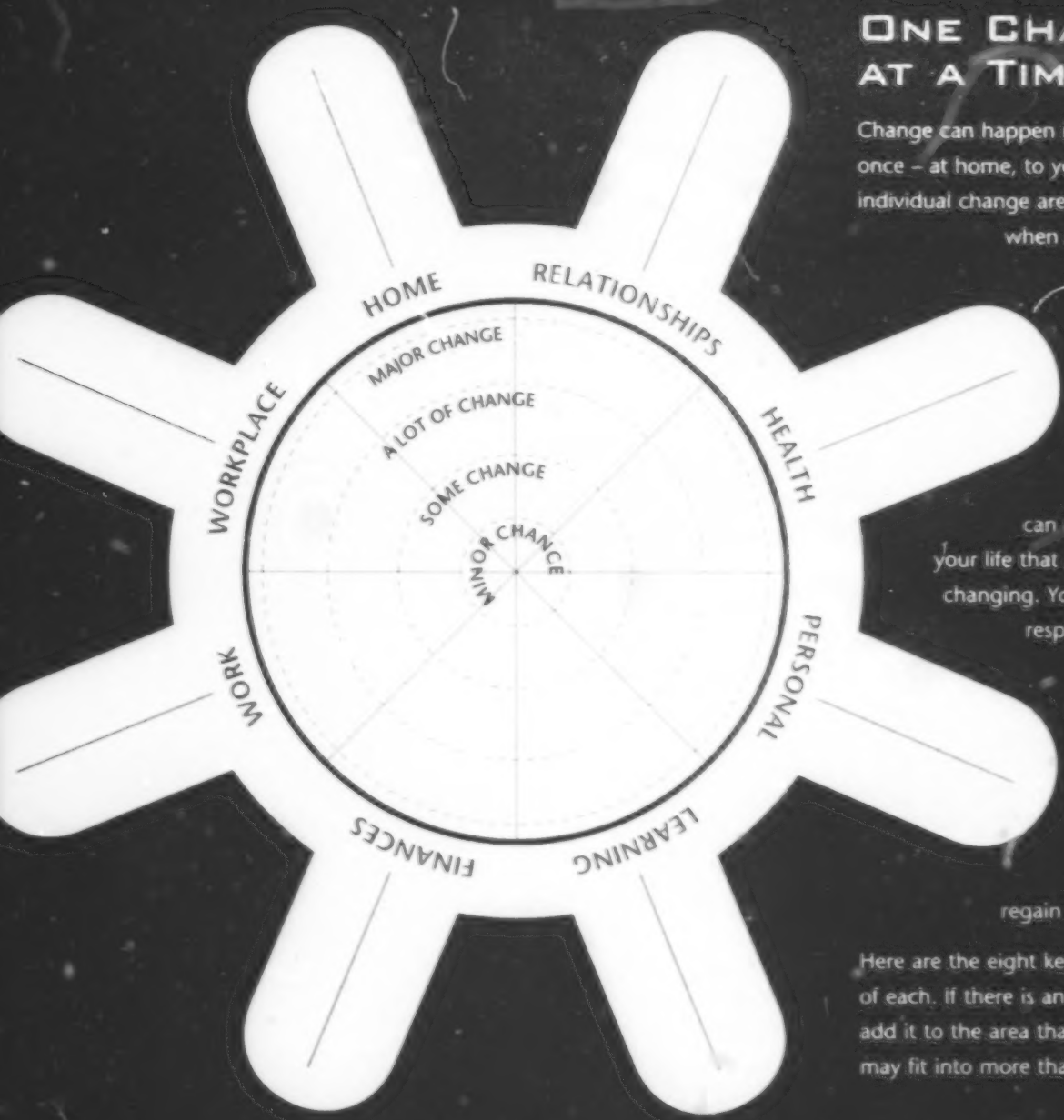

One Change at a Time

Change can happen in more than one area of your life at once – at home, to your health, to your family. Sometimes your individual change areas can feel somewhat manageable. But when change occurs in several areas, it can feel overwhelming, leading to a great deal of confusion and uncertainty.

The Change Wheel

The change wheel is a simple tool you can use to get a clearer focus on the areas in your life that are currently stable and those that are changing. You can use the change wheel to help you respond to multiple changes. By looking at your life in eight key areas you can determine how much change is taking place in each and how you are responding to that change. This helps you to recognize which areas you want to concentrate on. As you focus on stabilizing one area at a time, you will regain a sense of control over multiple changes.

Here are the eight key areas of life along with a brief description of each. If there is an aspect of your life that is not reflected, add it to the area that's the best fit for you. Some life situations may fit into more than one key area.

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EIGHT KEY AREAS OF LIFE

HOME – where you live and how you live

RELATIONSHIPS – your partner, family, friends and community

HEALTH – your level of health, physical fitness and leisure

PERSONAL – your spiritual, emotional and personal development

LEARNING – your skills, training and knowledge

FINANCES – the money you earn and the expenses you have

WORK – any paid or volunteer work you do

WORKPLACE – where you work and the people you work with

1. *Looking at the sections of the wheel representing eight different areas of life, consider the amount of change you are experiencing in each.*

2. *From the centre of the wheel move out to the dotted line that represents the degree of change you are experiencing in each area (minor change, some change, a lot of change, and major change). Colour or shade each section up to that dotted line.*

3. *Look at each area again. Regardless of how much change you identified, rate how you feel about your ability to respond to each change. Use the scale below, writing your answer on the spoke outside of the change wheel.*

- *Manageable*
- *Somewhat manageable*
- *Unmanageable*

Dealing With Multiple Changes – Larry's Story

Larry's life was going great. At 32, he had a wife, three wonderful children, his own home and a sales and service business that he had built from scratch. He still worried about the amount of debt he had on his house and business, but was prepared to take that risk. Then Larry was hit by a change that he did not see coming. The international company whose product Larry represented was bought out by its main competitor who already had a representative in the area. Larry was forced to try to sell his assets and start over. He failed to meet his loan payments when his shop and equipment did not sell right away. This placed great strain on his marriage and his wife left him and started custody proceedings. Within one year he had lost his business, his income, his home and his family. He didn't know where to begin to deal with the mess his life had become.

Larry used the change wheel to focus on one change at a time. He started with his housing situation. Although he was grateful to his friend for allowing him to move in temporarily, Larry felt he needed his own place. He checked out vacancies and chose the most suitable one for his budget. This move made it easier when his children came to visit. With his housing settled, Larry could focus on making plans about his work situation.

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4. *Pick one area where you want increased stability and control. Which one is it?*

5. *What can you do to increase the stability of this area? What obstacles do you need to overcome? How can you do this?*

6. *When can you make this happen? Be specific. Write down the dates that you plan to start and finish.*

Start working on your plan right away. It doesn't have to be a big thing. You will find that it will focus your energy and lead to improvements in this area of your life. Once you have increased stability in one area, choose another. You will find a sense of control returning – one change at a time!

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An Exercise in Control

Even if the change is one that you have chosen, you may still feel that you've lost control over the direction your life has taken. If the change is involuntary, you may feel especially threatened. Here is another exercise that can help you focus your attention when responding to change. Use the chart, or make up a similar one with the same headings.

1. Think about a change you have experienced or are about to experience.

Change: _____

_____

2. Write down the things about the change that you feel you can control, can control somewhat, or cannot control at all, in the appropriate columns.

3. Next, focus on those changes you can control or somewhat control. Identify ways to keep yourself centered on these areas. Let go of the things you cannot control.

Put your energy into areas where you can have some impact and see results, and you will begin to regain a sense of being in charge. Accept that there are some things that are not within your ability to control. By letting go of those, you can begin the process of moving forward.

I CAN CONTROL	*I CAN CONTROL SOMEWHAT*	*I CANNOT CONTROL*
(e.g. my attitude)	(e.g. if I work part-time or full-time)	(e.g. my age)

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RULES TO RISK BY

The more control you have over a situation, the healthier you feel about it. Regardless of what changes you are going through, you do have control over your responses to that change. You can exert control by making decisions about how much risk you want to take.

- *Assess the risk – never risk more than you are willing to lose.*
- *Reduce the amount of risk by doing research, building support, and getting as much control as possible over the outcome.*
- *Practice with small risks to build your confidence.*
- *Keep track of the risks you take.*
- *Look at risks that fail as temporary setbacks and opportunities to learn.*

DID YOU KNOW?

There's no such thing as a sure thing. Gathering as much information and support as possible builds a safety net and decreases the amount of uncalculated risk involved.

RISK

Risks are unavoidable in life. You face them every day. Sometimes the risks are physical, like climbing a mountain to overcome your fear of heights and gain confidence. Risks can be emotional, such as making a commitment to a relationship. Or, the risk can be financial, such as investing in a business or financing your education.

Everyone has their own comfort level when it comes to risk. What is risky for you may not be risky for another. As well, you may be willing to take risks in some areas of your life, like cooking new foods, but be very cautious in other areas, like managing money. Your willingness to take risks may be related to how you handle change. If your comfort level with risk is high, you may be more willing to embrace change. A low comfort level may stop you from making a change that you really want to make.

In order to develop as a person, you have to push yourself beyond what is most comfortable, try new things and take a few risks. Often, when facing change, you'll be uncertain of the outcome or won't feel you have complete control over the situation. Taking risks goes hand in hand with change and transition.

TAKE A CHANCE

One way to increase your capacity for risk taking is to take small risks every day. Look again at the eight areas of life that make up the change wheel (home, relationships, health, personal, learning, finances, work, workplace). Pick a small risk to work on, and make small adjustments in each area. By simply repeating that small risk until you become comfortable, you have expanded your comfort zone and are ready to move on to the next small risk. The bonus is that changes in your habits and routines can add creativity and excitement to life!

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Making the Transition

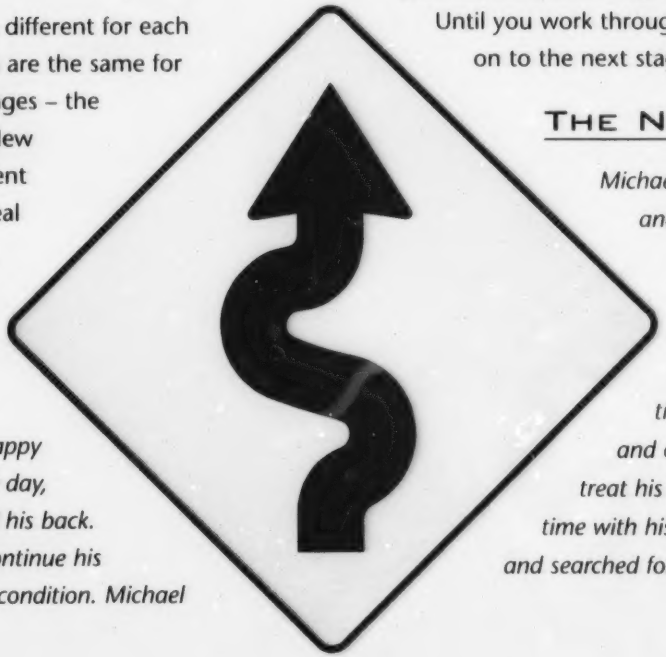
Every time something changes in your life you undergo a period of transition, a period when you react and adjust emotionally to the new situation. A transition period can be very brief, a few days or weeks, or it can take a few months or years. How much time depends on many things, including the type of change you're experiencing, how you feel about yourself, the kind of support you have, and whether you've chosen this change or not. Because everyone manages transitions in our own way there is no right or wrong amount of time.

The Three Stages of Transition

Though the factors and time frames will be different for each person, the process and stages of transition are the same for everyone. Transition involves three basic stages – the Ending Stage, the Neutral Stage, and the New Beginning Stage. Each stage involves different feelings and processes. Sometimes you'll deal with one stage before moving to the next, other times you'll slide back and forth between stages.

The Ending Stage

Michael was a journeyman welder. He was happy with his work and the money he earned. One day, while bending over to weld a joint, he injured his back. The doctor strongly advised Michael not to continue his welding job, as he would keep worsening his condition. Michael became bitter and angry.



Transition starts with an ending. Something has happened causing something to end. The first step in dealing with things that are new and different is to acknowledge that things have changed and to recognize what you will lose or miss because of it. You need to realize that things will probably have to be done differently now, and that you need to let go of the past. The hardest part of the Ending Stage may be recognizing that something really is over. Michael didn't want to quit welding. He denied that his back was as bad as his doctor said and blamed his equipment and working conditions.

You may feel angry, sad or shocked, and not want to accept your new situation. You may worry, doubt yourself and lose confidence. At the same time, you may have conflicting feelings of excitement. It takes time to grieve the loss, accept that the past is over and to let go. It may not be easy, but it is necessary. Until you work through the Ending Stage, you can't move on to the next stage, the Neutral Stage.

The Neutral Stage

Michael began to think about what he liked and did not like in his welding job. At 47, he needed to consider his age and how it would affect future work opportunities. He also thought about his lifestyle and interests. In his spare time, he liked to make stained glass lamps and ornaments. While he was in therapy to treat his back, Michael started to spend more time with his hobby. He took stock of his situation and searched for answers about the future.

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What Stage Are You At?

Now that you have reviewed the Three Stages of Transition, explore the stages for yourself.

1. ***Think of a change that has recently happened to you. Write it down.***

2. ***What emotions are you feeling? Write down as many as you can.***

3. ***Which of the three stages of transition do you see yourself in right now – Ending, Neutral or New Beginning?***

4. ***What is one specific task you can do in this stage that will help you? How will you do this? When will you start?***

As you begin to deal with the change, check in with yourself several times. Knowing the stages of transition will help you understand your feelings and reactions.

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The Neutral Stage is often the most uncomfortable stage because of its uncertainty. However, it is also the stage where you have the greatest opportunity to learn about yourself, thinking both about the past and the future. Working through the Neutral Stage will help you see opportunities and challenges where you once saw threats and barriers. As you begin to accept the change, you begin to create new opportunities for yourself and gather strength for the changes to come.

This stage can be confusing because you will find yourself between the old and the new. The Neutral Stage is like a bridge that you've decided to cross, even though you don't know what is on the other side. You may feel scared, unfocused or depressed. You may, for a while, feel helpless, lonely and stuck. These are typical feelings. That's how Michael felt. Once he accepted that he would no longer be able to work as a welder he didn't know what to do next. He had been a welder all his adult life. He questioned his skills and abilities. He was anxious about the future.

The Neutral Stage is a time to question, reflect, talk to other people, explore options, and search for answers. There is plenty of free help out there. Career planning workshops can help you become aware of your strengths and start the process of exploring the future. Career and employment advisors are available to talk to and can suggest books with exercises to help guide you through your decision making. For more information, call the Career Information Hotline, a free service for Albertans (See Resources).

The New Beginning Stage

Michael began selling his stained glass products to some of his friends and to their friends. They encouraged him to market his stained glass to stores and now Michael sells his work at a specialty gift shop. This gives him some needed income and a source of pride in his skills. He's also registered in a course in

welding inspection so he can build on his past experience and knowledge. Though Michael is not sure everything will work out, through the initial steps he has taken he has become much more optimistic and hopeful about his future.

After a period of reflection and exploration in the Neutral Stage, you're ready to start again by taking things step by step. You want to move on, to try new things, or take a calculated risk. You've moved into the New Beginning Stage.

At this stage, you'll begin to feel more energetic and positive as you take the first tentative steps to carry on with your life. You may also feel excited and a little nervous about the future. Are you doing the right thing? Will this work out? You may feel happy that you're moving forward. These feelings are all typical.

(Source: Adapted from William Bridges, *Managing Transitions*)

Face Your Fears

Fear is a fact of life. Whether you call it worry, anxiousness, or concern, everyone has fears that affect them at least some of the time. Some of the more common fears in times of change include:

- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of embarrassment
- Fear of looking bad / disapproval
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of trying
- Fear of taking risks

Career Change Checklist

Here are a few things that can help you during a period of career transition:

- ■ do a skills assessment
- ■ update your resume
- ■ exercise your mind and body
- ■ laugh when you can
- ■ keep up your networking
- ■ stay flexible; nothing is set in stone
- ■ take a course
- ■ indulge in a hobby
- ■ help others by volunteering
- ■ don't go it alone; talk to friends and family
- ■ set realistic goals
- ■ take time for yourself
- ■ take time to dream
- ■ be creative
- ■ take a risk

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Moving to the City – Marie's Story

Marie is an Aboriginal woman in northern Alberta and has worked as an assistant to a social worker for the past six years. Her own experiences have taught her strategies that she now uses to help others. Marie would like to become a social worker so she can work more effectively in her community. Her research showed her that she could do this from home through distance education. Marie thought about it, but knows she learns best by practicing with other students and through classroom instruction. Such a program is not available locally. She has some savings and can access funding, so money is not keeping her from going back to school. Marie is scared of being away from home and family and of living alone in an unfamiliar city.

The common thread in all of Marie's fears is uncertainty. She is unsure of her ability to handle the unknown without her community close by. She really wants to go to school, though, so she asked everyone she knows for suggestions. Marie has heard about the Aboriginal students' centre on campus and other resources in the city. Her sister is going with her to offer support until she feels settled. Marie is starting to feel more confident.

Seven Strategies for Handling Fear

Fear is one of the major obstacles to embracing change. As you go through change and transition you're likely to feel varying degrees of several kinds of fear. One of the best 'fear busters' is to enlist help from the personal and professional connections around you. To ask for support you have to overcome a fear of being rejected. Asking for support is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of confidence.

Don't let fear block you from doing what you want to in life. Even the most confident people have fears. They have learned and practiced strategies for handling their fear. You can learn these strategies too!

1. Name your greatest fear

What scares you about the transition you are going through? Say it out loud. Write it down. This way you can stare it in the face and know exactly what you are dealing with. Often, fear loses some of its power once it has been identified.

DID YOU KNOW?

Setting small goals and visualizing what you need to do to succeed can help you overcome your fears.

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2. Ask yourself "what if?"

Imagine what could happen if your fear became true. Be specific and write it down.

How would you feel if your fear really happened?

Now that you have a good picture of the worst that can happen, think of things you could do. How could you handle it?

Planning how to handle something in advance reduces your fear of the unknown and increases your ability to manage it.

3. Don't waste time worrying

What if your fear didn't come true after all? Research suggests that 90% of what we worry about never happens. Are you going to let a 10% chance stop you from doing what you want? Think back. Have there been times when you worried needlessly? Is this a pattern you would like to change? How?

4. Deciding to do nothing

Ask yourself "what if I do nothing?" Sometimes, the best solution is deciding not to choose at this time. What could happen in your present situation if you do nothing?

How would you deal with it?

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Returning to Work – Sherryl's Story

After eight years at home raising her two children, Sherryl was thinking of going back to work as a chemical engineering technologist and contributing to the family income again. She was worried that her skills would be out of date, or no longer needed. The equipment may have changed since she last worked. Even if she was able to find a job, Sherryl was afraid she wouldn't fit in and would be like a fish out of water. Maybe she should consider some other type of work? If only she had kept working part-time, returning to work wouldn't be such a big deal.

Sherryl's inner voice was working overtime. Which of the seven strategies for handling fear could she start using? Whatever you answered is right! Practicing any of the seven strategies could help Sherryl to face her fears and carry on with her goals.

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5. Fear of the unknown

Often fear comes from not knowing what to expect. Lessen your fear by getting information from talking to people, reading books and searching the Internet. Turn your unknowns into knowns.

Where can you go for information?

Who can you talk to for support?

6. Facing your fear

Do something! Sitting at home stewing about your fear actually makes it worse. Facing your fear and taking a small action or risk toward dealing with your fear builds confidence and lessens the fear.

Many people dread going to a job interview. Go to the site of the interview a day or two before. Learn how to get there, how long it takes by bus or by car and if you will need change for parking. Go into the building, get a feel for the atmosphere and pick up company brochures. Check out the dress code by seeing what employees are wearing to work. These actions are far more productive than sitting at home worrying.

What action can you take to confront your fear?

7. Believe in yourself

People are often their own worst critics. Focus on maintaining a positive attitude and remind yourself of your strengths. Change your "I can'ts" into "I cans".

Here are a few positive things you can tell yourself:

- I am now aware of my fears
- I am losing my fear of change
- I am finding the right job for me
- I am prepared for the job interview
- I am making a good decision
- I am becoming more confident every day
- I am adapting to change

Add your own statements. Write them down in the present tense and keep them positive. Keep repeating these messages. Change your negatives into positives.

Support

Don't go it alone. Another key to navigating the transition period is to ensure that you have a support network available. Friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, mentors, health care practitioners and clergy are just some of the people you can turn to for a helping hand, a friendly conversation, guidance and advice. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Explore Your Options

Rather than wait for change to happen, you have the power to create your own change. You can choose to change work roles, start or end a relationship, start an exercise program or leisure activity, have a child, move to a new location, or enroll in a course or training program. Life would be boring without change!

Choosing a New Direction – Colleen's Story

After ten years working in the not-for-profit sector, Colleen was wondering what was next in her life. The challenge and satisfaction of her job as assistant program manager was no longer there and she was becoming increasingly frustrated. Colleen spent time setting new goals. After rediscovering her passion for the applied arts field, she quit her job and registered in an art program at college. Within the first week, she knew she had made the right decision. Although older than most of the students, she found this was not an issue for her or them. To bring in a little income, Colleen did a short contract for an advertising firm. The company liked her work and offered her full-time summer employment, which has turned into continuing contracts.

Colleen is using her creativity and enjoys the challenge of combining work and school.

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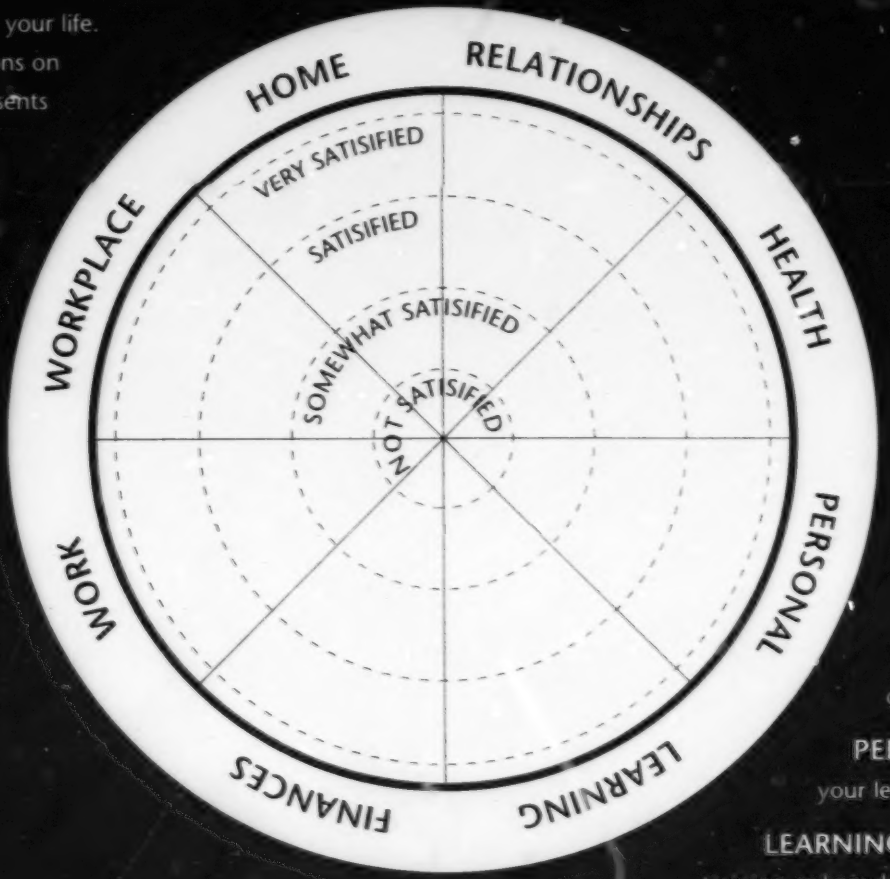
The Choice Wheel

Like the change wheel, the choice wheel is a tool that shows you where you may want to implement a change in your life. Each of the eight sections on the choice wheel represents an area of life. The *choice wheel can help* you figure out which areas of your life are satisfying to you now, and which are less satisfying. Using this information, you can choose which area you would like to create a small or large change in.



Eight Key Areas of Life

HOME - are you satisfied with where you live and your lifestyle?

RELATIONSHIPS - how solid is your network of family and friends?

HEALTH - do you have any health or wellness concerns?

PERSONAL - are you satisfied with your level of personal growth?

LEARNING - are you satisfied with your skills, training or knowledge?

FINANCES - are you comfortable living on what you earn?

WORK - are you happy with your present work situation?

WORKPLACE - do you like where you work and the people you work with?

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New Opportunities In Retirement – Wendy's Story

After over 30 years of working in human resources for a manufacturing company, Wendy decided to retire at age 60. She thought her life would be an extended vacation, and it was, for the first six months. Then she got restless. She was feeling the loss of social contact with former co-workers, the sense of belonging she had felt, the daily routine of work, and the satisfaction she had doing work that benefited others. She was also feeling the pinch of living on less money than she was used to. Wendy asked other retirees how they handled their retirement. She thought about her needs and the lifestyle she wanted in this phase of life. A friend told her about the local volunteer centre. She also heard about a small human resources consulting firm that did work outsourced by other companies. Wendy decided to volunteer one-half day a week helping children learn to read in a school close to her home. She also began part-time contract work with the human resources firm. The extra income allowed Wendy to pursue some new interests.

Wendy looked at the areas of her life and made choices that would best suit her new role as a retiree. She has increased her satisfaction in several areas of her life, and is now finding early retirement is all that she wished for.

1. Think about the degree of satisfaction you have with each area of your life.

2. Colour or shade each section from the centre out to the dotted line that represents your degree of satisfaction - not satisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied.

3. If one area of your life could become more satisfying, what area would you want that to be?

_____

_____

_____

4. What can you do to increase your satisfaction in this area?

_____

_____

_____

5. When will you start to make this happen? Be specific with a start date. Start immediately, if you can.

_____

_____

_____

Now, put this on your to-do list, calendar, or organizer, and start to make it happen.

Hope – Energy to Support Change

Working through changes and transitions takes time and it takes effort to overcome doubts and fears. One strategy for managing change is for you to become intentional about your hope.

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Access your Hope

Take a moment to look at what changes you are facing and what you can do to increase your hope.

1. *What major change are you facing in your life?*

2. *On a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the highest), how would you rate your hope right now?*

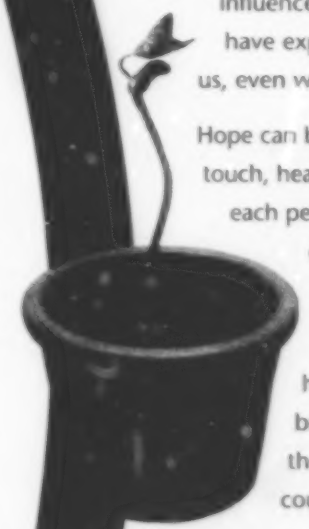
3. *Describe a time in your life when you felt hopeful.*

4. *What is the smallest thing that could happen to increase your hope?*

5. *How can you nurture your hope? (for example, listen to hopeful music, cook a favorite food, call a good friend, etc.)*

What is Hope?

Wherever there is uncertainty, confusion or conflict, there is also hope. Hope is the energy that helps you cope and move through the tough spots in life. Hope is a sense that you will be okay no matter how things turn out. Very simply, hope is the "yes" to life.



Each person's hope is unique. It is shaped and influenced by the people and events they have experienced in their life. It's inside all of us, even when it is difficult to see.

Hope can be accessed through our senses of touch, hearing, sight, taste, and smell. Because each person's hope is different, how you express hope is as individual as you are.

Develop an active awareness for things and activities that give you hope. Then, set short-term goals to build your hope by participating in them. Examples of things and activities could be:

- Creative activities – paint a picture, cultivate your green thumb, work on a craft project
- Identify 'hopeful' role models and apply those characteristics to yourself
- Construct 'hope' collages or take photographs
- Write a story that describes your hope
- Volunteer in your community

Explore various aspects of your hope. Hope can play a role in helping you manage change more effectively.

(Adapted with permission from The Hope Foundation of Alberta)

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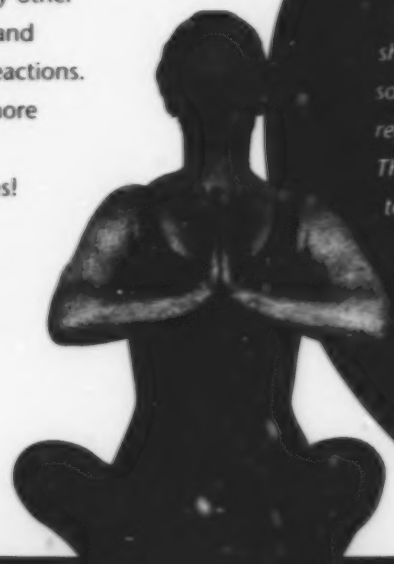
Reducing Your Stress

It's a fact, life can be stressful. Learning to cope with this stress is an important step to ensuring a healthy, balanced life and improving your ability to manage change.

Stress the Good Points

A little stress is a good thing; it drives us, it challenges us. You feel anxious, your heart beats faster, and your breathing speeds up. It's your body's normal flight or fight reaction to danger. It's good to know where it comes from so that you can work at managing it. But too much stress is not healthy. It can cause increased blood pressure, stress headaches, and many other physical and mental reactions. Don't ignore these symptoms!



DID YOU KNOW?

Eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep can help to reduce your stress.

Looking for Work –Suhana's Story

Suhana was shocked when her employer decided to outsource the company's whole finance department and she was laid off from her accounting clerk job. She updated her résumé, read the classified ads in the newspaper, and faxed her résumé to a number of employers. To her amazement, she did not get one response! After numerous attempts, she became discouraged. She started to sleep in longer, snack on junk food, and watch television during the day when she knew she should have been out looking for work. She felt guilty but couldn't help herself. Then a friend invited Suhana to join her for a walk. Suhana wasn't really keen on going, but she had nothing better to do. Getting out of the house, smelling the fresh air, feeling her body move and strain a little felt surprisingly good. Suhana felt relieved to talk about her lack of success in finding work and to learn that her friend had been through a similar experience a few years earlier. They decided to go for a walk again the next day and the next. Her friend suggested that Suhana should update her computer skills. Suhana thought it over and decided to find out more about new software programs and the places where she could get training. While getting this information and registering for a training course, she took a free workshop on résumé writing and the hidden job market. Then when Suhana contacted potential employers recommended by people that she knew, she was asked to several job interviews.

Suhana did a number of things that helped her manage stress. She got out of the house to walk and talked to a friend. Suhana found new information and upgraded her computer skills. She rewrote her résumé and networked with her colleagues from her old job. Though this did not immediately result in new work, she started to feel like she was making progress.

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Feeling Over-Stressed?

People are funny. Sometimes we try to take on too much, do too much and be too much. This may lead to your becoming stressed out. Signals of excessive stress can be:

- Less talkative
- Less energy
- Lower productivity
- Late for work or meetings
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of appetite
- Decreased wants

Simple Stress Busters

- Sing your favourite song as loudly as you like
- Take a long hot bath or shower
- Let yourself have a good cry
- Scream into a pillow
- Make up a fantasy - starring you - and enjoy it for a few minutes
- Walk or run around the block
- Hug your children
- Do something nice for someone
- Smile at three people you don't know
- Relive a favourite memory

Combat Stress in Your Life

Change causes stress. Looking for work causes stress. The reorganizations, downsizing, outsourcing, mergers, and technological changes over the past decade have all increased stress in the workplace. Then there's stress at home, dealing with relationships, house repairs, family budgets, and more. While stress can be a powerful motivating factor, it's important to keep it at a manageable level.

Tips for Reducing Stress

Different people manage stress in different ways. There is no one right way to reduce stress. Choose what works best for you.

Take things one at a time and one day at a time

There's a limit to how much you can do. Set priorities. When you have many tasks and responsibilities, concentrate on the one thing you need to do now and put the others aside until later.

Listen to your feelings

Listen to yourself. Reframe your thoughts in a positive light. For example, "I will be as ready as I can be" as opposed to "I will never be ready in time."

Breathe deeply

This is easy, effective and takes only minutes a day. Feel the immediate calm when you stop to consciously breathe in deeply through your nose from deep down in your diaphragm. Place your hand gently on your stomach to feel it expand a little as you breathe in. Hold for a few moments, and then slowly let it go, all of it, through your mouth.

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Relax in a calm setting

Sit outside, smell the flowers, watch the clouds overhead, or enjoy the silence of freshly fallen snow. If you can't be in a natural area or park, head to a balcony, deck, garden, or walking trail. Or visualize a peaceful setting that works for you.

Listen to music

Pick music that soothes you. As you listen, mentally focus on one body part at a time, starting with your head and gradually moving to your toes. Slowly tell each to relax. Feel the tensions melt away.

Move your body

Go for a walk during your lunch break. Run, bicycle, swim, dance, lift weights, or play a sport. Feel energy, vitality, and zest return.

Laugh it off

Spend time with fun people in fun situations. Watch funny movies or television shows. Read books that make you chuckle. Play with a pet or a young child. Laughing releases tensions and reverses the physical effects of stress on your body.

Do something creative for yourself

Enjoy something that interests you that will keep your hands busy and absorb your attention for a while. Garden, paint ceramics, create a scrapbook, draw, doodle, or work with wood and other natural materials.

Live a balanced life

You've heard the one about all work and no play. Make time for family, friends and leisure activities in your life.

Talk to someone

Tell your story and fears to a person you feel comfortable with. Or, call a help line. Or, get it off your chest by writing it all down on paper, letting the words flow without stopping to check or edit. Look for ways to make changes and improvements.

START REDUCING YOUR STRESS TODAY

What stresses you out?

Pick one of the tips to reduce stress that you can start doing right now. How will you do this? What time of day will you do this? Try this regularly for three weeks until it becomes a habit.

Apply another tip when you are ready. Practice for three weeks until it, too, becomes a habit.

Continue your new habits or try any other stress reducers, until your stress is at the level you are comfortable with.

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Create a Better Life Balance

How often do you hear people say that they need more balance in their lives? Sometimes it feels like life is controlling you rather than you being in control of your life. Think about the number of activities you try to fit into every day.

- Work
- Learning
- Leisure
- Relationships
- Eating and Household Tasks
- Sleeping

Think of the various roles you may play – student, worker, spouse, parent, friend, volunteer and homemaker. Your life balance varies to accommodate the activities, needs and responsibilities of your roles at different phases of your life.

There are only so many minutes in a day and you want to spend your time wisely. Yet if you don't think about how your days are spent it is easy for things to get hectic.

How do you Spend Your Time?

Take a few minutes right now and think about how you spend your time.

Dig through your pockets, check the bottom of your dresser drawer, shake the piggy bank and find 24 pennies. Each penny represents an hour in your day. It's up to you how you spend that hour.

- Put a penny in the columns below for every hour you spend on that area a day. Eight hours of sleep = eight pennies in that column. If you didn't find enough pennies, use a pencil and make checkmarks. But remember only 24 checkmarks in total.

		Current Total	Desired Total
Work			
Learning			
Leisure			
Relationships			
Eating and Household Tasks			
Sleeping			

- Add up the pennies in each column and write the score in the Current Total column.

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Have a look at your current life balance. Now that you see it laid out before you, what do you think? Are you happy with how you are spending your time, balancing your life?

- Spend your pennies again. This time spend them the way you would like to have your life balance look. Write the score in the Desired Total column.

Do you want to make changes in how you are spending your time currently to achieve your desired life balance? For example, can you get up an hour earlier for a fitness activity or read the newspaper and have a quiet cup of coffee before the rest of your family wakes up?

You may want to talk to your family and ask them to do this activity with you. Then you can compare desired life balances to understand how priorities may differ between family members. Are there major discrepancies between how you like to spend your time? Your spouse may want to spend more time on some areas than you do. Be open to negotiating and think of ways to compromise. Work together towards achieving a satisfying balance for all.

Creating Balance – Linda's Story

As a nurse in a busy unit of the local hospital, Linda was in high demand. She worked regular 12-hour shifts and took extra shifts when other nurses were sick or on holidays. Linda basked in the appreciation of her patients and their families. But, Linda had little time for her partner because plans were constantly changed to accommodate her changing schedule. Her father recently passed away and she spent more time with her aging mother. There was no time at all for herself. When she got home, Linda collapsed tiredly into bed. She started to get migraine headaches and some days she couldn't even get up. When Linda considered her life, her relationships, and her stress-related headaches, she knew she had to make some changes before her situation got worse. She and her partner loved to dance, but had not gone for a long time. They started to go dancing once a week, making it a priority on their schedules. She also started to take a little time each day to breathe deeply to calm herself.

As a result of making these two changes, Linda had more fun and exercise, and her relationship with her partner improved. She created a better life balance and reduced her stress.

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The Right Attitude – Chris' Story

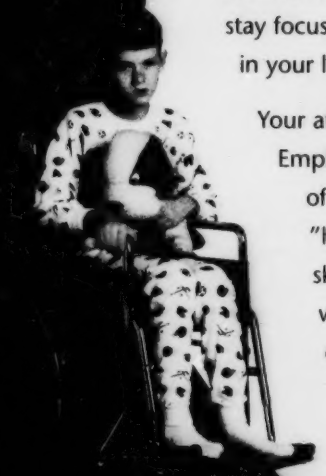
Chris grew up in a number of foster homes, full of anger and rebellion as a youth. During college he met some people who strongly influenced him, and managed to turn his life around. He worked for several years at a job transporting people with disabilities. Then he had several setbacks. At 30, while on his motorcycle he was hit by a car and almost died. The doctors told him he would never walk again. His background of working with people with disabilities, his faith, and the support from the medical team around him helped get him through the grueling year of rehabilitation and learn to walk again. Chris went to work as a dispatcher for a trucking company. Later, other health problems forced him to re-assess his career direction once more. Instead of despairing, he remained optimistic.

Chris realized that even the best plans can go astray. He had learned to give his best to his job and his family and friends. He knew that he would find a way to weather any of life's changes.

HAVE A POSITIVELY GOOD DAY

Here are a few tips to staying positive all day long.

- Start your day by looking for something good that is happening. It may be the sun shining, a bird singing, a refreshing drink of water, or your pet showing its affection for you.
- Choose your attitude for the day. Focus on the good.
- Give someone an unexpected compliment.
- Ignore the bad drivers on the road.
- Really listen to what someone is saying and focus on understanding them.
- Read people's biographies and see the challenges they have overcome.
- Help someone.
- Explore your spiritual life.
- Before going to sleep, review your day and note the small positive things that happened.



STAY POSITIVE

A positive attitude can make the difference between success and failure. Attitudes are based on what you've learned and experienced, and affect the way you think, act and feel. Staying positive can help you stay focused as you work through changes in your life.

Your attitude says a lot about you. Employers recognize the importance of a positive attitude, and often "hire for attitude and train for skills." A positive attitude in the workplace has a positive effect on co-workers and customers. Put your positive attitude to work for you.

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Keep it Simple

Simplifying the way we live is one way to regain control of our lives during times of change and transition. Take into account what you need to live, what you want, and what you can do without. You'll be surprised what fits into the last category. Consider these ten steps.

1. Plan ahead

- save and invest for the future
- maintain a good credit rating and keep credit to a minimum
- prepare and use a budget
- establish an emergency fund

2. Spend time with people who are important to you

- family, friends and neighbours are part of your support network
- often the simplest pleasures are the most rewarding
- don't be afraid to ask others for help

3. Re-evaluate your priorities and values

- focus on the things that bring you meaning
- think about your personal values and work obligations
- look at your life balance

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A Simple Solution – Kathryn's Story

At 42, Kathryn was a successful manager in charge of a large staff. She left for work each morning at 7 a.m. and didn't return until 7 p.m. each night. With a partner and two teenagers at home, it was a full and demanding life. When the company she worked for took over another company, Kathryn's workload increased. Could she handle more work? Should she move on? Was it time to change her career direction? Kathryn designed and created unique quilts as a hobby and was drawn to doing something more with her creative talents. If she quit her job, could the family live more simply and manage on a reduced salary? After discussing the possibilities with her partner, she registered in a career planning workshop to explore her options. She quit her job and began working part-time selling fabrics in a retail store. While it was a huge cut in pay, the job was only minutes from home and allowed her to research a variety of work options, including part-time self-employment. Kathryn is leaning towards a multiple career track, not putting all her eggs in one basket.

By choosing a new direction in response to change, Kathryn's life is much less demanding. She appreciates the flexibility of being able to organize her schedule.

4. Manage your debts

- see a credit counsellor about debt resolution options
- consolidate your loans
- contact creditors about managing payments
- contact a financial planner

5. Spend time doing the things that are important to you

- explore your hobbies and passions
- exercise your mind, body and spirit

6. Spend less

- grow your own vegetables
- shop for generic-brand products and buy in bulk
- use the library and other community services
- sell or park your car – take a bus, carpool, walk, or ride a bike

7. Listen to yourself

- take control of your own life
- steer yourself toward doing what you enjoy
- turn your "I can'ts" into "I cans"

8. Earn extra money

- have a garage sale – this will also give you more control over the material things in your life
- rent out a room in your home
- do temporary, part-time or seasonal work
- start a low cost home-based business

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9. Remind yourself that your needs are important

- look after yourself so you will be able to look after others
- do a little something for yourself every day

10. Get help

- ask family members and friends for their support
- call the Career Information Hotline at 1-800-661-3753 for the location of career consultants, resources and workshops (a service for Albertans)
- contact government, community or company resources for eligible services and programs
- explore the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website at www.alis.gov.ab.ca, for career, learning and employment information.

In Summary

Change will always be a part of our lives, it happens every day and to everybody. Regardless of whether the changes are voluntary or unexpected, learning how to deal with them is an essential survival skill for life.

This book has provided you with information on change and transition. You have been presented with a number of tips and key strategies on how to move through the transition period and overcome the stress you may be feeling during this time.

Take it easy. Take the changes as they come and make the most of them.

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Resources

Looking for more information on change and transition? Here are a few good places to start. We have mentioned many of these resources in other parts of this booklet. Here, we tell you how to get the information.

Services in Your Community

Career Information Hotline

Call the Hotline for answers to your questions about:

- Career planning
- Occupations
- Job search skills
- Education options
- Information and referrals
- Links to services in your community

Phone: 1-800-661-3753 toll-free in Alberta
780-422-4266 in Edmonton

Hearing impaired access,
1-800-232-7215 for message relay service or
780-422-5283 for TDD service in Edmonton

E-mail: **info@alis.gov.ab.ca**
Website: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/hotline**

Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres are located throughout the province. They have information on occupations, career options, education programs and funding, and finding work. Many offices have a career resource centre with books, newspapers, magazines, software and audio/video materials. They also may have computers for Internet use and word processing, and phones and fax machines to use with your work search. You can also talk to a career consultant. These services may be offered by other agencies in your community. Call the Career Information Hotline for the office closest to you.

Youth Connections

Youth Connections offices provide career and employment service for people between the ages of 16 and 24. Offices are located in communities across Alberta. Contact the Career Information Hotline for the location nearest you. You can also check out the Youth Connections web link at **www.youthconnections.gov.ab.ca**

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Websites

Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS)
www.alis.gov.ab.ca

Alberta's on-line source for career, learning and employment information. Here you will find the resources you need for making the most of your future.

ALIS is the Alberta partner of Canada WorkinfoNET and contains a direct link to WorkinfoNet.

WorkinfoNet
http://www.workinfonet.ca

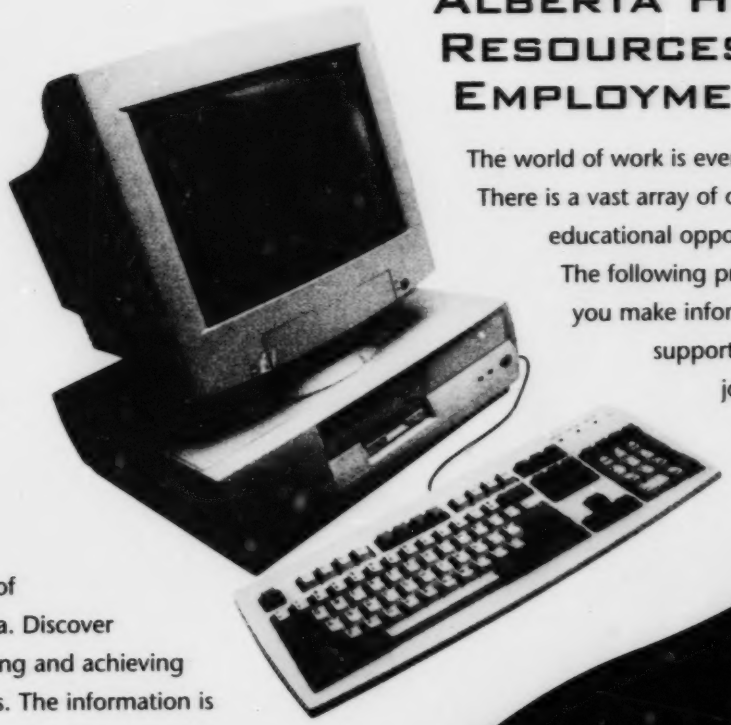
WorkinfoNET connects you to a wealth of up-to-date resources from across Canada. Discover information that will assist you in planning and achieving your educational and occupational goals. The information is available in both English and French.

Alberta Futurescapes
http://www.ab.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/lmi/futurescapes

Alberta Futurescapes highlights emerging areas where work is changing and looks at areas where there may be future growth.

The Hope Foundation of Alberta
http://www.ualberta.ca/hope

The Hope Foundation of Alberta is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to understanding and enhancing hope in individuals, families and institutions.



Publications from Alberta Human Resources and Employment

The world of work is ever changing, just as you are. There is a vast array of occupational and educational opportunities available today. The following print resources can help you make informed decisions and support you on your journey.

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These books are available free of charge to Alberta and NWT residents. To get your copy:

- Visit Youth Connections or an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre
- See the *Career Shop* catalogue website at www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop
- Call the Career Information Hotline

More About You

Focus on yourself. Spend time exploring and defining the interests, skills and values that affect your career decisions. Use these resources as you self-explore and identify career options that are right for you!

Career Planner

Written in an easy-to-read style, this workbook uses five steps to a career path. Create a self-portrait to match against seven occupational categories. Work through exercises to answer these questions – What am I doing right now? What do I need to know? What have I done so far? What do I need to do now? What actions will I take?

Multiple Choices – Planning Your Career for the 21st Century

This book provides you with the career building knowledge and skills you need to make decisions. Practical exercises help you clarify your dreams, identify your skills and assets and recognize attitudes and beliefs that either support or hinder you on your life's journey.

Positive Works II

Put positives to work for you in all areas of your life: goal-setting, learning, improving relationships, coping with stress, and getting and keeping work. This book is full of exercises and tips for you to help find out where your positives shine and where they need polishing.

Radical Change in the World of Work: The Workbook

A self-directed workbook that takes adults through the range of work options available to them. It covers everything needed for today's career building: self-analysis, visioning, attitudes and beliefs about work, relationship building, exploration of work alternatives. Themes include the 5P's of planning – pride, passion, purpose, performance and poise.

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Skills Plus Handbook –
Discovering Your Personal Career Assets

A self-assessment handbook to help you learn about the skills and assets you have that make you adaptable in today's world of work. Completing the exercises will develop a summary of personal assets as a framework for your future career choices.

Volunteering – How to Build Your Career by Helping Others

Covers the many benefits volunteering offers you as a career-building strategy for gaining experience, adding new skills, making contacts and researching career ideas.

Woman Today, Edition 1

This supportive magazine is for women who are going back to school or getting ready to look for work. It will help them balance all the new demands in their lives and create success on their own terms.

Woman Today, Edition 2

For women who are getting ready to step into the world of paid work, either for the first time or after some stops and starts. Take those first steps with confidence!

More About Trends and Research

Be alert and aware of the trends and occupational changes happening around you. Keep informed by asking questions and checking out information. These resources will help you research.

Alberta Careers Beyond 2000 Update

This book focuses on the global and provincial forces of change that drive Alberta's economy and society.

Finding Out – How to Get the Information You Need to Make the Choices You Want

This book makes information gathering a simple process. Start with an inventory of your desires, interests, skills and values. Then list career options that match. Identify your questions, and begin to look for answers! Use research to get your career planning on target.

The Investigator

Alberta information, phone numbers and websites that provide career planning, education and work search information.

More About Education Planning

Keep your skills and training up-to-date and practice life-long learning! These books are full of information about education and training choices in Alberta.

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It's About Time...to choose a post-secondary education program

Planning to take post-secondary training in Alberta? Here's help to answer many questions: What programs are offered and where? How do I decide on an educational program? What's the difference between college, a technical institute and university? This book also contains overviews of educational institutions.

Education and Training Planner

This workbook describes the range of education and training options available in Alberta.

More About Work Search

The world of work is ever changing, so it pays to be ready to take advantage of new employment opportunities. These books will help you sharpen your job search skills.

Creating a New Future: The Job-Loss Workbook

Ease the transition from being employed to being unemployed to moving on and creating a new future. This workbook offers a range of practical information, exercises and options for the laid-off worker.

Employment Series for Persons with Disabilities: Tips for Job Seekers

Information for the person with a disability looking for work. It will help you identify and overcome challenges, create opportunities, and deal with typical concerns and questions relating to work search and employment.

Job Seeker's Handbook

Are you new to the job search process? This step-by-step guide has tips, checklists, exercises, sample letters and résumés to lead you through the basics of finding work.

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Other Publications

Want to read more about change and transitions? Check your local library or bookstore for other publications. Here are some to start with.

Boom, Bust, and Echo 2000, Profiting from the Demographic Shift in the New Millennium. Foot, David with Stoffman, Daniel. Macfarlane Walter & Ross, Toronto, ON (1998).

Dare to Change Your Job and Your Life, 2nd edition. Kanchier, Carole, JIST Works, Indianapolis, IN (2000).

Feel the Fear and Beyond: Mastering the Techniques for Doing It Anyway. Jeffers, Susan. Fawcett Columbine, New York (1998).

Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change. Bridges, William. Addison-Wesley Publishing, Reading, MA (1991).

Sanity Savers: the Canadian Working Woman's Guide to Almost Having It All. Douglas, Ann. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Toronto, ON (1999).

Simple Living in a Complex World – Balancing Life's Achievements. Irvine, David, Red Stone Publishing, Calgary, AB (1997).

Who Moved My Cheese? An A-Mazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life. Johnson, Spencer with Blanchard, Kenneth, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York (1998).